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SUBJECT: NEW KUWAITI MINISTERS PLEDGE TO FIGHT TERROR,
PROMOTE MODERATION

¶1. In public statements on February 11, the day of the swearing in of the new cabinet, three senior Kuwaiti Ministers made comments about specific aspects of the fight against terrorism. During courtesy calls on the new cabinet members in the coming weeks, Ambassador will be reinforcing the U.S. message that counter-terrorism requires a sustained, well-supported approach at all levels.

Prime Minister

¶2. Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Mohammed Al-Sabah told the other Ministers and the press, "I am sure you will agree...that enhancing positive values among the youth is a priority. Consecration of the culture of tolerance, dialogue, moderation and denouncing violence and religious extremism" should be the path of policy.

First Deputy PM, Defense and Interior Minister

¶3. Shaykh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, (now with three titles), is quoted in Sunday's papers as saying that terrorism is an international phenomenon that requires coordination and cooperation to be rooted out, especially in Arab and Muslim states. Asked about threats against Kuwait by Zarqawi, the Minister said, "Kuwait is alert to the spread of terrorism and armed attacks. Shaykh Jaber also made specific mention of improved security cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, noting that "all channels are open without restraint" He said he looked forward to meeting with Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef as soon as possible.

Minister of Awqaf, Justice

¶4. Abdullah Al-Matouq (taking on an additional job as Justice Minister), is quoted as saying that "Kuwait will be a shining center of moderate dogma for the world." He said Kuwait would establish a center to spread justice, tolerance, equality and global acceptance of the other....There will be several projects within our program, including a center for the Prophet's biography. The activities would also include "dialogue between civilizations and a project on the western mental image of Islam and Muslims and means to restore it. (By SEPTTEL, we will provide highlights of a report produced last year by the Awqaf Ministry containing some precursors of this program.)
LeBaron